

Master Gardener Program

In 2004, the King County Extension Master Gardener Program is educating and serving the citizens of the county at 34 plant clinics, a phone clinic, a diagnostic clinic, seven demonstration gardens, three outreach gardens, a Youth Education Program, and a speakers bureau.

At the present time there are 641 active Master Gardeners. This number in-



Plant sale and Education Fair

Photo WSU KCE staff

cludes the 85 new Master Gardeners who completed training this year.

In 2003, Master Gardeners contributed 30,325 hours of volunteer time to the citizens of King County. They were able to help 26,804 people in need of horticulture advice. Approximately 1,350 youth were reached through the Youth Education Program, and the demonstration gardens presented a total of 65 free classes to the public.

New this year --

New this year is a special partnership between King County Master Gardeners and the Seattle Mariners. Master Gardeners advise and assist the lead groundskeeper at Safeco Field with maintaining the plantings around the stadium. They are also a presence inside the stadium at plant clinics on selected game days.

The big picture....

Master Gardener (MG) volunteers receive WSU certified training preparing them to diagnose plant problems and give horticulture advice to residents of King County. MG education emphasizes environmental stewardship through environmentally sound gardening. You'll find MG volunteers hosting plant problem clinics, tending demonstration gardens, giving lectures to interested community groups, teaching at K-12 schools, and hosting food gardening workshops.

The program continues to seek additional ways to assist King County residents with advice on appropriate gardening practices. This year, three new clinics were opened. Two of these are in South King County, a previously underserved area.

Program Details:

- Master Gardeners staff plant clinics in 28 communities throughout the county, making the program avail-

able to members of the public who have questions about gardening and horticulture.

- The phone clinic operates Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. to answer questions.
- Master Gardener diagnosticians meet every Wednesday to diagnose plant samples submitted by the public.
- Master Gardeners also staff plant clinics at special events, such as the Northwest Flower and Garden Show and the King County Fair.
- There are seven gardens where Master Gardeners demonstrate techniques for environmentally safe gardening practices and show county residents how to grow flowers, vegetables, fruit trees, perennials, and even cacti using water-wise gardening practices and integrated pest management techniques. Four of these demonstration gardens feature regular lectures and workshops that are free and open to the public.
- Master Gardeners also manage three outreach gardens. These include a fragrance garden for the blind and gardens at a domestic violence shelter and a center for developmentally disabled adults.

Improving gardening & gardeners in King County

Education provided by the Master Gardener program has been shown to affect daily decisions made by gardeners.

- Studies show gardening to be the most popular hobby in the United States. Its impact on the environment is great.
- The Master Gardener program in King County provides information and demonstrations on ways, not only to lessen the harmful aspects of this impact, but to actually benefit the environment.
- 85% of residents surveyed in 2003 stated they made changes in pest management methods, pesticide use, plant selection, and watering practices based on information provided by Master Gardeners.

The King County Master Gardener Youth Education Program includes 23 school gardens, a Teaching Kit Clinic that provides interactive programming to youth of all ages, and an e-mail newsletter. The Teaching Kit Clinic was the winner of the Search for Success 2003 award at the annual Master Gardener state conference.

The speakers bureau continues to be a popular service to the community. Forty Master Gardeners volunteer to share their time and expertise on a variety of topics.

Want to become a Master Gardener...?

Master Gardener Volunteer Program applications are available and accepted only during August and September each year for classes that begin the following January. During these months you can download an application form from <http://www.metrokc.gov/ws-u-ce/Gardening/MasterGardener/HowToApply.htm> or request one by calling 206-205-3122

In addition to the 650 active Master Gardener Volunteers, WSU Extension provides many resources for home gardeners. Our Community Horticulture personnel includes WSU faculty members and professional staff. Our on-line gardening resource section(<http://www.metrokc.gov/ws-u-ce/Gardening/GardenResources/Index.htm>) has information about clinic dates, locations of demonstration gardens, horticulture publications and much more.

For more information about the King County Master Gardener Program, please visit our website at <http://www.metrokc.gov/ws-u-ce/> or call 206-205-3122

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Master Gardeners at Bellevue Demonstration Garden
Photo WSU KCE staff

